

# THE GODS OF SIMLA

Entry No. 43 in Our Prize Story Competition

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The Monkey Evidently Saw That His Sanctity Was Not Appreciated by White Folk.

As usual, the Viceroy of India went up to Simla to escape the hot weather. For the same reason all the greater official lights followed, with a foreign consul or two representing the diplomatic corps at the viceregal court; hence, one part why Colonel Cruden, Consul General, U. S. A., and family were registered early in the season at Peliti's hotel. The other part was Miss Cruden's insistence that Simla was never so much better than the Western Ghats or Darjiling as a summer resort. Not that she had been there previously; but on the way out from Europe it had all been explained to her by a certain young A. D. C. to the Viceroy, Lieutenant Lord Marston, 17th Dragoons. He had been very earnest about the matter, painting the Simla atmosphere in idealistic colors. Anyone can imagine the impression made when two deck chairs are drawn close together, while a P. & O. glides easily over a tropical sea. Therefore she had prevailed and carried her parents up to Simla.

Up to Simla also soon came the other people who want things apart from climate,—deputies and assistants on the Civil Side, Colonels and Majors of the military, their wives, daughters, and establishments, all hoping by some lucky chance to gain five minutes' private talk with the Viceroy. Lastly the official barrier against native Princes was cautiously let down, and a few privileged rulers permitted the ascent to bask in the light of the Viceroy's favor. This mandate is strictly enforced; otherwise Simla would become a vast camp of political intrigue.

Among the first of those to arrive was the young Maharaja of Bikandra. His journey had been rather enforced to explain certain proceedings not quite pleasing to the supreme Government. A little less horse racing in favor of a trifle more rulership, perhaps more of the best native traits in place of undesirable European habits,—such was the advice purposed to impress upon him. His father had been a favorite of former Viceroy; that was why the present holder of office summoned the young Maharaja for a heart to heart talk. He was personally attractive in his London made clothes, except the turban; but as yet was clearly in need of a bearing rein. He went to Peliti's with his suite,—that famous hostelry where holy monkeys scramble over the roof, peer in at the windows, drop down through skylights, steal hairpins, and if you are not forewarned may give you the scare of a life by awakening to find one chattering away on the foot of your bed. As before remarked, the Crudens were among Bikandra's fellow guests at Peliti's.

Everyone knows how official Simla combines social entertainment with the business of governing over three hundred millions of people. A stranger might imagine the whole scheme of it lay in dances, dinners, amateur theatricals, polo, picnics, and rides on the mall; but the telegraph wire that runs down from that airy of the Himalayan foothills could tell a different story. Occa-

sionally the Viceroy looks quite serious; but not for worlds would he admit there was anything more on his mind than his deep regret that certain stunning Paris frocks must remain in their trunks, because a Highness of some kind had died thousands of miles away and the court had gone into mourning.

INTO that side of Simla life the Crudens, of course, found the doors wide open. For the first two weeks Mrs. and Miss Cruden were busy scrambling up and down the hillside in their rickshaws returning calls, while the Colonel went his official round scattering visiting "pasteboards." In the meantime Marston discovered that his duties frequently took him the same way as Miss Cruden's rickshaw, trotting close to her flying wheels, and impressing upon her jumpsees horrible threats if they did not take particular care of the American "burra memsahib," which means a lady of the great official world as apart from the *chala* or little people. Simla, of course, took notice and discussed the matter over afternoon teas.

So things went along pleasantly until Miss Cruden entered her room one afternoon to put on her habit for a ride with Marston. On a lounge she noticed a small silk embroidered box, such as is used sometimes by native jewelers to hold a valuable trinket, and possibly fashioned with great skill out of a discarded wafer can. Curiosity prompted Miss Cruden to open the box and remove the usual layer of wadding. She discovered a glittering hair ornament, also a half sheet of tinted, perforated notepaper. Thereon was inscribed a translation of some Persian verse breathing the ardor of that subtle language in which the single word "rose" bears at least twelve shades of meaning. Manifestly, one should be very careful in writing Persian verse to a lady. Miss Cruden at once set aside Marston as the source of the gift. He knew a lot about tiger shooting; but was hardly of the temperament to risk the danger of Persian verse by way of expressing his sentiments. Besides, no one would accuse Marston of writing on pink notepaper strongly suggestive of musk. She was puzzling over the question of the donor when her native maid jangled into the room.

"Hanki," she questioned, "who sent that package I found on the lounge?"

Hanki glanced at her mistress's face, then at the open box. "Memsahib, I do not know," she answered.

"You do not know!" repeated Miss Cruden rather severely; for the suspicion entered her mind that Hanki had been bribed to concealment. "But you must know something about it!"

"Not I!" protested Hanki. "Would the Memsahib accuse me of telling a lie, who live upon the bounty of her honored parent? Am I not a respectable married woman, with a husband who is groom to this family by the Memsahib's favor? Have I not an uncle?"

"Yes, yes!" Miss Cruden cut short an endless kin-

folk panegyric. "But if you didn't put it there, who did?"

Hanki threw up her hands with a clash of brass bangles. "If I do not know, how can I tell?" she cried. "Are there not servants of other people, utterly below the Memsahib's rank, in this place, also sweepers and water carriers of low caste, with whom the Memsahib knows I do not associate? But if the Memsahib wishes, I shall ask the head khitmutgar."

"No," reflected Miss Cruden on a second thought, which prompted the desire not to make the matter of undue importance all over Simla, "I will find out in another way. Besides, I am in a hurry for my habit."

WHEN her riding attire was complete, she locked the trinket in her desk and thrust the pink note into her glove. Then she went out, to find Marston waiting to assist her into the saddle. They rode off at a smart canter. After they had escaped from the observant eyes of Simla and broken into a slower pace, she introduced the subject of her mysterious present. She produced the note from her glove and handed it to Marston. He regarded it with keen disapproval.

"Jove!" he exclaimed. "Who on earth could have sent you a thing like that? It must have been some native chap. Let's think of a possible culprit—Bikandra?"

"But," she protested, "why should he send me 'a rose plucked from his heart' in verse, backed up by a diamond hair ornament? We have met the Maharaja out a few times, and he and Dad have exchanged calls; but I have hardly spoken a dozen words to him. It would be absurd to suppose he had sent me the present."

"Impossible to say," remarked Marston, tugging thoughtfully at his blond mustache. "You never can tell what these native fellows will do next. Perhaps, if I challenge him to polo, and hit him over the head by accident, we shall learn the secret."

"You will not do anything of the kind!" she enjoined. "I am sure Bikandra did not send it."

"Then who did?"

"Exactly what I asked Hanki without gaining a satisfactory answer. So far as I can see, we must await developments."

Here the subject was interrupted by the Viceroy's carriage swinging round a curve. When salutes had been exchanged, the incident directed conversation upon the Viceroy's levee and dance the following night. Marston poured into a sympathetic ear the troubles of an A. D. C. over matters of dress and precedence.

"Now there's Bolton-Thorp," he illustrated a particular case. "Thorpe is a political—by the way, Resident at Bikandra's capital. The Thorpes are staying with the St. Clairs. St. Clair is merely on the staff of the Surgeon General; but Mrs. St. Clair's father is a Knight and an M. P. Now, then, who is to bob first to the Viceroy, Mrs. Thorpe or Mrs. St. Clair, guest or hostess?"

"Give it up," laughed Miss Cruden.

"Yes; but I can't," he complained wearily. "As you are on the diplomatic list, I should have thought you would have been able to help me better."

Chatting in this way they paced together, until they returned to Simla as bungalow lights began to dot the purple hillside and a fleecy mist crept into the deeper valleys. A hasty *au revoir* was all that could be exchanged before Marston galloped off to his evening duties.

"Don't mention the present to anyone," she bade him. "I should prefer not to fix the guilt without being certain. Perhaps the owner will call or send, having discovered a mistake."

"I know how to obey a command," laughed Marston, waving a hand to her while his horse reared on two legs and shot into the twilight.

THE bestower of the gift was apparently not aware that he had committed a serious breach of taste, neither did he seem in a hurry to disclose his identity. He did not call to explain during the next twenty-four hours, and Miss Cruden began to wonder how to settle the matter. The value of the trinket was an additional reason why she did not consider herself by any means its rightful owner.

But for the time being the Viceroy's dance was uppermost. The Crudens had dined early, and their rickshaws were at the door, when Miss Cruden ran back into her room for a light wrap.

And there, seated at her writing table, was a gray whiskered old monkey, presenting an absurd figure in imitation of a human being reading a letter, only upside down. He had evidently purloined a packet of letters

from somewhere; for half a dozen others lay scattered around. The monkey peeped over the edge of the letter and grinned at Miss Cruden. She caught up a parasol, the nearest weapon, and advanced threateningly on the beloved of Hunuman. She flourished the parasol, and the monkey evidently gathered that his sanctity did not reach unto the white folk. With a cry between chatter and scream he dropped the letter, leaped for a hanging drapery, climbed up until he was able to swing to a shade, and then went out through the skylight.

At first Miss Cruden was indignant at the thought that the monkey had rifled her desk; but a glance at the first letter she picked up disclosed an unfamiliar woman's handwriting. Then she started; for the first lines revealed an unwise infatuation for the Maharaja Bikandra. More than this, they disclosed the writer's agreement to trust her fate in Bikandra's hands on the night of the Viceroy's dance. Simultaneously light broke on the diamond hair ornament and the perfumed poetry. The monkey had stolen the trinket box from the Maharaja's suite and brought it to her room for a reason best known to himself. He may have thought it was a safe place to investigate, if he thought at all about the matter. He had dropped the jewel box as he had done the letters, on being scared by someone's entrance.

All that was clear enough; but what about the girl—Miss Cruden judged the writer was still in the romantic period—who purposed to stake her future happiness with the odds of a hundred to one in favor of unspeakable misery? Granted that Bikandra's present intentions were of the best, which his character hardly warranted, overshadowing such an alliance was the dread penalty of caste exclusion, and in a sinister background the jealous enmity of the Maharaja's own womenkind. Miss Cruden had been told on good authority that when a woman took such a step she was not heard of much subsequently; in a little was quite forgotten, then disappeared. Children of hers never came to maturity. Imagination may fill in that which is not recorded. She shuddered at the thought of the girl whose future seemed to lie in her hands, but whose identity was concealed under the mere initial E. How in the world was she to reach the unknown E in time to urge against haste and secrecy in a matter of such vital consequence? Just then Colonel Cruden's voice summoned her impatiently.

"Yes, Father, I'm coming," she responded. She gathered up the letters and paused. How was she to act?

"Constance! Constance!" urged the Colonel. "Don't you know we're late already, and you're engaged right from the start for dances with the Viceroy, the Commander in Chief—and the Lord knows who?"

"Yes—yes, Father!"

"Well, come along, Child. My conscience! you'd keep the whole British Empire waiting and let me in for no end of undiplomatic excuses!"

**S**HE hastily thrust the letters into a place of security. The only plan that occurred to her was to disclose the matter to Marston at the first opportunity. In a few minutes her rickshaw was flying over the road to Viceregal Lodge with the clear exhilarating air of the hills sweeping her cheeks. On levee nights Viceregal Lodge has a fame of its own. In the lantern decked grounds the crowd of liveried jamaanees adds a picturesque life touch to the scene.

As specimens of physical perfection in man nothing finer is likely to be encountered than the statuesque figures of the Viceroy's Sikh bodyguard lining the vestibule. Then the salons hung with trophies gathered from the ends of the Empire, and the brilliant group of evil and military officers forming a half-circle about the Viceroy,—gold lace, glittering orders, and flaming ribbons. When tiaras glitter and court gowns bear the touch of Paris, on that subject what more need be said? Blinding splashes of jewels here and there mark the presence of Indian Princes; but on this occasion Bikandra had sent excuses with profound salaams.

But of all this Miss Cruden observed little, searching the throng eagerly for Marston. It transpired that he had been sent on some errand and did not reappear before the dancing began. She was eagerly claimed by one distinguished partner after another; but her thoughts

were entirely centered on the secret given to her by Hunuman. More than once she glanced at a fresh complexioned English girl sweeping rhythmically past to the strains of a military band, and tried to detect in her manner the peril she might be tempting; but they all seemed carefree.

Presently she found herself sitting out waiting for Marston, whose name was set against that number on her card. She was beginning to feel a trifle uneasy on her own account, when the truant A. D. C. in his dragoon uniform strode to her side with a hurried jingle of gilt spurs.

"I'm awfully sorry. You'll never forgive me, I fear," he pleaded; "but rather an unfortunate thing happened." Miss Cruden looked up quickly with a question in her eyes.

"Don't quite understand it," he went on to explain; "but Miss Thorpe—daughter of Bikandra's political, you know—fainted over a sprained ankle. It's an awfully painful thing, of course; but the queer thing was she didn't seem quite certain which ankle. Got them both mixed, and St. Clair couldn't detect which was injured. In any case, I had to pack her into a rickshaw and send her off home."

Miss Cruden sprang to her feet so suddenly that her

"I can't help that," she swept aside all argument. "You must go after her and prevent her eloping with Bikandra!"

"What?" ejaculated Marston in astonishment.

In a few words she disclosed her source of information, pointing out that the sprained ankle was clearly a ruse, and that it was on her conscience to rescue the girl from the probability of ruining her whole life.

"So please don't lose another moment!" she begged. "And don't come back, mind, until you have seen her in safety!"

**H**ENCE, Marston went out into the night half inclined to believe he was bound on a quixotic errand at the capricious behest of a delightful American girl, for whose sake he would do anything on earth; while she tried to invent plausible excuses to cover his absence. But when hour after hour sped by without his reappearance her ingenuity in that respect said much more for her native mental alertness. It was certainly taxed to the utmost. Finally, when the dance closed with still no sign of Marston, she went home in fear that she had sent him to some phase of disaster. It was Hanki who roused her to the fact that the next morning was far advanced and that Marston Sahib had been impatiently waiting to see her for a long time. Miss Cruden rose at once, and as she dressed hurriedly made it plain to Hanki that the good intention of permitting her to sleep indefinitely was in this instance a culpable mistake. Her custom of putting on her habit for a morning canter served her well subsequently. She found Marston striding up and down their private sitting room in a state of what the doctors call high nervous tension.

"My word! I'm glad you've come at last," he greeted her. "I'm in an awful mess on account of that Thorpe girl you sent me after."

"Please sit down and tell me just what you have done," she invited him to a state of calmer reason.

"Simply can't remain still a moment, Constance."

It was the first time he had called her by her Christian name, and reproof did not pass her lips.

"Neither would you," he went on, "if you had been given the choice of engaging yourself to some one you didn't care an anna about, or public disgrace. I have until twelve o'clock to settle the matter, and it's now ten minutes to eleven. Jove! it—it really was mistaken kindness on your part to send me after the Thorpe girl, because I haven't the faintest desire to marry her."

"Marry the Thorpe girl!" gasped Miss Cruden with genuine concern. "Why, how can that be possible?"

"Oh, easy enough when everything piles up like a horrid nightmare," grimly replied Marston. "Listen how I plunged from one crime to another! When I went out I impressed a Councillor's rickshaw to follow Miss Thorpe. That was offense number one. The Councillor already wants to know by whose authority I used his rickshaw. Then I ran into a trick played by Bikandra. He had thoughtfully provided a dooly for Miss Thorpe to change into when clear of the viceregal grounds. Consequently, I chased an empty rickshaw all over the hills until I discovered my error on reaching St. Clair's bungalow. Next I learned from a mounted sowar of the Finance Department that he had passed Bikandra escorting a dooly on the road down to the plains. I promptly requisitioned the sowar's horse, for which I am answerable to the Finance Department. At last, when I came up with Bikandra, he was not inclined to relinquish his prize; neither did Miss Thorpe wish to be rescued. Hence a free fight, in which I was compelled to knock Bikandra off his horse. I imagine I shall hear about that from the Political Department."

"Good Heavens! How unfortunate!" exclaimed Miss Cruden with much feeling.

"Yes; but that's not all," continued Marston. "When I captured the girl, she wasn't complimentary about my action. Not grateful, I assure you! Then she went into hysterics, and it took a long time to make her see things in a reasonable light,—that Bikandra was personally undesirable, and not patterned after an honorable man, who, considering the circumstances, if he could not win



"I Was Compelled to Knock Bikandra Off His Horse," Said Marston.

action startled Marston. Her fingers clutched the gold embroidery of his sleeve impulsively. "What is her name—her Christian name?" she questioned eagerly.

"Why—er," Marston made an effort of memory,—"upon my word, I don't recollect."

"Oh, you must know," she persisted, "because you sent out the invitations."

"Yes; but there were such a number. By Jove! I can't be expected to recall every girl's name in Simla. The Viceroy wouldn't demand so much as that. Hers, too, is rather a peculiar name—something like Eulalia."

"Are you sure that it began with an E?" she urged.

"Yes, I know it did because I was quite puzzled over the name to get it correctly on the list."

"Then you must go after her at once—immediately!" she insisted. "You must see that she does go home and stays there until her parents return!"

"Oh, I say," protested Marston, staring at Miss Cruden in bewilderment. "Isn't that rather a queer thing to suggest? I—I'm not responsible for her sprained ankle. I wasn't dancing with her. Besides, what would people think?"

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quests for the stocking of streams, lakes, and ponds with fish of various kinds. This means that Mr. Bowers has reorganized and perfected the working machinery of the bureau so that it does for the fishing industry what the Department of Agriculture does for the plants of the country. The bureau, first of all, keeps the supply of fish up to the mark in all waters; but, in addition to this, it learns by experiments and investigations whether fish indigenous to the Atlantic seaboard can be planted and made to multiply on the Pacific Coast, whether the trout of California will live and prosper in the streams of the Alleghenies, and whether, by peculiar treatment, fish found in warm waters can be transported to colder waters, and vice versa.

THE Human Hook, seated at his desk in Washington, operates the meshes of the country-wide seine that replenishes, interchanges, and acclimatizes all species of fish. He has under him at this time thirty-five propagating stations and eighty-six field and collection stations. These cover an area of thirty-two States. Last year he presented to foreign countries six hundred thousand eggs. They went to France, Japan, and Argentina, which countries were anxious to improve and replenish their fish supplies. In the same year he scattered in the waters of the United States three and one-quarter thousand millions of young fish and fish eggs. When it is remembered that the total value of the fish landed at Boston and Gloucester by American fishing vessels in one year reaches as high as \$4,616,444, it can be realized that this Human Hook person has a large part to play in the commercial development of the country.

One of the oddest things in the service he has developed is his fashion of having young fish carried for any distance he chooses across the country. Securing an appropriation from Congress for the purpose, he bought six Pullman palace cars and transformed them into fish cars. The lower berths of the cars are used for tanks, and the uppers are the sleeping quarters of the men in charge of the finny tribes. In one end of each car is an engine that aerates the water in the tanks; for, all beliefs to the contrary notwithstanding, fish have to have air as well as human beings. For instance, when Bowers concluded that the California trout could be made a fixture in some of the mountain streams along the Atlantic seaboard, he ordered his men to go to California, catch a carload of trout, and haul them back across the continent. The instructions were carried out, and the rainbow boys are now disporting themselves in some of the streams in the Alleghenies.

It should be mentioned that, while it cost the Government in 1898 \$292.92 to propagate one million fish and eggs, it now costs, under the Human Hook's management, only \$146.36.

BUT there is one thing that dims the happiness of Mr. Bowers. He may smile as he reflects on the multiplication of blackspotted trout in Yellowstone Park; he may pat himself on the back as he considers the rescue of fish from overflowed lands in the upper valley of the Mississippi; he may grin with pride in recollecting the cement hatching troughs at Bozeman, Montana; and he may laugh with glee over the reports of how merrily the chinook salmon has taken to the waters of Lake Superior,—he may do all these things, only to feel cast down when his thoughts rest on the fish that are invalids. For Bowers is not only a fish fooler; he is a fish physician. Fish do get sick. They have headache, and they flop over suddenly on their backs and kick the bucket—or the water. And Bowers wants to prevent epidemics and contagious outbreaks in the family. So far it has been a secret to the uninitiated. But here it goes—fish have tumors and cancers! And this is what Bowers reports on the subject:

"The gravest phase of the matter is the possible relationship of some of these diseases to more or less kindred affections occurring in human beings. It has been determined that a type of cancerous affection is of widespread distribution among domesticated trout and their offspring planted in the streams. Whether this disease has a causal relation to cancer in human beings, or whether the two are even to be traced to the same source, is a matter of doubt; but the annually increasing mortality from cancer in man and certain remarkable coincidences in the geographical distribution of the disease in man and fish, render it imperative that it should be made the subject of minute inquiry.

"Investigations at various stations of the bureau and at other hatcheries have shown that the disease is even more widespread and general than was suspected. Considerable difficulty has been encountered in obtaining for purposes of experiment a sufficient number of fish above suspicion of infection, and it has been necessary in this effort to secure a quantity of wild trout from remote streams. Owing to the technical difficulties attending this work, which are equal to those retarding the advance of knowledge relating to the cause and nature of cancer in human beings, progress is made only by slow and painstaking steps and by use of the most approved appliances and methods."

While he is trying to cure the fish cancer, he is also speeding an improvement. The much maligned catfish he considers one of the best fresh-water food fishes in the country, and he wants to develop that opinion among farmers, the fellows who own a small ice pond down at the foot of the hill. He believes that catfish can eat anything and live in almost any kind of water, and within the next year hopes to be in a position to send out to all applicants the beginnings of catfish schools.

In his off minutes, when he is not hunting the cancer cure, collecting catfish, or sending other varieties to all sections of the country, he is puzzling out a method for fattening oysters ahead of time.

TAKING it all in all, the Human Hook looks after the interests of every class interested in fish, whether that interest is stimulated by the capturing or by the consumption of fish. The angler loafing along the banks of a stream in Maine hooks a trout, plays it, and lands it, without pausing to thank Bowers for having put it there. My Lady of Fashion nibbles at a lobster; but never stops to think that the delicacy would be extremely scarce without the aid of George. Even the men who make a livelihood by catching the carp, the mackerel, the cod, and the salmon rarely realize their indebtedness to the commissioner in Washington.

Bowers was a member of the West Virginia Legislature when he was twenty-three years old. After that

he was active in State and national politics. He was only thirty-five when he took his present job. His conduct of the bureau has been on the theory that the service needed up to date business methods. Of course, he was obliged to engage in that eight months of study, just enough to teach him how to translate the Latin names of fishes into English; but after that he jumped on the job with more commonsense than literary frills.

The result has been to make him the world's leading authority on fish culture and to give him a heavy financial responsibility, that of keeping the fish industry in good condition.

Wherefore, none disputes his title as the Human Hook and the Hungry Harpoon.

## THE GODS OF SIMLA

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her in the open would seem to do so clandestinely. I think it dawned upon her that she had been too impulsive in consenting to marry Bikandra in the way he suggested, and she begged me not to tell her parents. Of course I agreed, naturally wishing to shield the girl. That was my undoing later. In the meantime I captured another rickshaw—a Commissioner's, I believe—to prevent embarrassing questions being asked about Miss Thorpe's returning home in a native doli.

"Finally, when we reached St. Clair's bungalow, Thorpe was waiting for us on the veranda. He was not in an amiable mood; in fact, was ready to explode with anger. Miss Thorpe promptly ran into the house crying, and left me to explain. That, you see, is just what I couldn't do, after my promise. I was compelled to be silent and listen to Thorpe raving about my enticing his daughter away from the Viceroy's dance and keeping her out until three in the morning. He rambled up and down the veranda, shaking his fists, and every three steps declaring I hadn't a spark of gentlemanly feeling in my nature; otherwise I would at once offer to marry his daughter. At last he tossed me the choice of publicly announcing our engagement by noon this morning, or reporting my disgraceful conduct to the Viceroy. Upon my word, it's an awkward position! It really is, because my mouth is absolutely closed," he wound up in accents displaying a desperate view of the case.

AT this moment Colonel Cruden entered after taking his morning health stroll. He halted when across the threshold, and stared at Marston severely through his glasses. He did not extend his usual cordial greeting; but spoke with pointed emphasis on his words.

"I met Mr. Thorpe just now going up to call on the Viceroy. He told me something that makes me surprised to find you here, Lord Marston. I may add I understand Miss Thorpe is suffering from nervous prostration, and unable to give any account of what took place last night."

"Which leaves me like a dumb beast tied to a stake for castigation," added Marston, with settled gloom on his face.

To remark that Miss Cruden was exerting all her mental energy in the crisis that had befallen them, would be to speak with reserve. She glanced out of the window, to notice the groom leading her pony back and forth, and resolved upon her course intuitively. She must take the matter in hand and see the Viceroy before Thorpe did. The Viceroy had always been nice to her, would of course believe her side, and must help them out of the difficulty, including Miss Thorpe. First, though, it was necessary to enjoin a truce upon her father and Marston.

"Now, Dad," she assumed her most beguiling manner, "you're the dearest old Dad that ever was; but you don't know a thing about what has happened, and your daughter hasn't time to explain. I want you two men to sit right down and promise me not to talk about anything except polo until I return. If you don't, I shall be real mad, and you know what that means."

Thereupon she forced her father into a chair, thrust a cigar between his fingers, and made Marston take a similar position.

"Remember," she raised a warning finger, "you are to keep friends until I return! As things are, I simply can't trust either of you. You'd have all Simla worked up to the lightning point in half an hour."

In a few moments she was on the back of her pony, galloping to Viceregal Lodge, with her spirit downing the fears that clung to her riding boots.

NOW, his Excellency the Viceroy was sitting in solemn conclave with the Members of Council when he noticed a girl flit up the drive as if borne on the wings of extreme urgency. He was too deeply absorbed in a portentous state problem to remark her appearance particularly, until she actually stood before the Supreme Council of the Indian Empire. How she had gained entrance past chuprassies, the bodyguard, and the A. D. C.'s, she did not explain. Neither did she say how she had nodded pleasantly to Thorpe, waiting and likely to wait long for the viceregal car. Instead, she went straight to the point of her impromptu call, an immediate private talk with the Viceroy, which, pleaded with earnest simplicity, was irresistible when taken in conjunction with her personal charm. Nevertheless, it was a situation utterly without precedent—a young lady breaking in upon the Supreme Council of the Indian Empire—and the members stared at one another as if a thunderbolt had struck the board.

"I know your Excellency would listen to what I have to say," she argued, "because Dad has warned me never

to bother business men in their offices unless I have something really important. And you have always been so good and kind to me!" she added.

Her business point was well taken as an original expression. After all, they were business men. In the real governing of the Indian Empire there is not much frivolity; as witness Sir Duncan, the hard headed old Scottish financial member, who looked on her with kindly approval. Meanwhile, the fighting little Irish Commander in Chief's native gallantry would not permit him to remain seated in the presence of a lady. He and Sir Duncan gave a cue to the Viceroy. His Excellency rose, inclined his head slightly toward Miss Cruden, and invited her into an anteroom.

"From what I know of your father I feel sure you will be as brief as possible," he suggested.

She at once responded by telling her story in a straightforward manner. As she proceeded the Viceroy's brow clouded, and it was evident that he regarded the matter in a serious light.

"I thank you," he said when she concluded, "for presenting this information clearly. Marston is, of course, exonerated; but I am greatly displeased with Mr. Thorpe, as Resident at Bikandra, for permitting his daughter to become entangled with the Maharaja. In this particular situation it might have led to serious consequences. He will hear of it shortly."

"Oh, but that will never do!" protested Miss Cruden. "Never do?" ejaculated the Viceroy, taken aback at her frankness.

"No, because then Miss Thorpe will suffer. I am sure you would not wish her to be made more unhappy than she is, and—and, after all, nothing dreadful has actually happened."

"Perhaps you will tell me what I am to do," requested the wondering Viceroy, "to mark my sense of displeasure and at the same time save the young lady's face, as we say in the Orient? Besides, there is Marston to consider in the case."

"Oh, first stand by your A. D. C.," she answered. "Your word cannot be questioned. Then send the other people away in good humor to places where the matter will be forgotten. You need not ask Mr. Thorpe to return, if you do not wish."

The Viceroy's grave face broke into a smile. Then he laughed in a way that is seldom heard in that abode of responsibility. Presently he rang a bell, and one of his secretaries responded. The Viceroy gave directions for an order that ran somewhat as follows:

His Excellency, having been informed of a delicate political mission performed by Lieutenant Lord Marston, A. D. C., on the night of the sixteenth, takes great pleasure in entirely approving his conduct.

In consideration of services rendered by Augustus Bolton-Thorpe, Esquire, at Bikandra, he is given an extra year leave of absence in Europe, to take effect immediately.

The Maharaja Bikandra, having given satisfactory assurances to the Supreme Government, is herewith permitted to return to his State.

"And I'll take care of him when he gets there," added the Viceroy. "Do you consider this will save Miss Thorpe's position?" he asked Miss Cruden.

"It will be due to her own lack of ingenuity if it doesn't," she answered. "We have done our best to help her. You cannot imagine how grateful I am to you, Lord Grantbury!" she extended her hand in frank acknowledgment.

"And I to you," he bowed gallantly over it, "for a lesson in governing the Indian Empire. By the way, though, what have you done with my A. D. C.?"

"Oh, I left him and Dad scowling at each other, but under promise to talk only polo."

The Viceroy laughed again and called back his secretary. "Send a chuprassy at once with a note of invitation to luncheon for Colonel and Mrs. Cruden. Include Marston. Add that I am retaining Miss Cruden."

"And now," he turned to her, "if you will find Lady Grantbury, I shall return to my council board. I only wish I had the power to ask you to take a seat at it."

ON the other side, Thorpe didn't see the Viceroy; but was shown his Excellency's order. That sent him home puzzled, but with a closed mouth regarding Marston until such time as his daughter could explain. When she did, it must be presumed she was able to exonerate Marston without disclosing her own secret; for not a whisper of it reached the social world of Simla. Still, said world wondered for a space what could have been Marston's political service publicly praised by the Viceroy. Hunuman, the Monkey God, of course knows; but you have probably seen a figure of him with a paw on his mouth. That means, Let there be silence when speech shall cause another's distress.